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ABSTRACT

A study comparing the attitudes of teachers in three public school systems in Tennessee with those of teachers in two public school systems in Michigan is summarized in this report. The object of the study was to determine the effects of professional negotiations upon the professional attitudes of teachers. The Michigan school systems have been involved in professional negotiations for about ten years; Tennessee will begin such negotiations in January 1979. A questionnaire was submitted to the teachers concerning their attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career dissatisfaction. While analysis of the data indicates positive attitudes on the part of a majority of the teachers, it is concluded that the process of professional negotiation may cause the professional attitudes of teachers to be more negative than those of teachers who have not yet engaged in the process. A copy of the questionnaire is appended to this report. (JD)

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A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS IN FIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN TENNESSEE AND MICHIGAN

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A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS
IN FIVE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS
IN TENNESSEE AND MICHIGAN

This study compares teacher attitudes in public school systems in Cumberland, DeKalb and Putnam Counties, Tennessee, with those of teachers of the Fowlerville and Brighton public school systems in Michigan. The comparisons were made to determine the teachers' attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career dissatisfaction. The Tennessee school systems will begin professional negotiation in January, 1979, and the Michigan systems have been involved in professional negotiations for about ten years.

The significance of this study is that it might provide insights into the effects of professional negotiations upon the professional attitudes of teachers. It compares teacher attitudes in five somewhat similar school systems. One important question to which an answer was sought is: Does the process of professional negotiation cause teachers to have different professional attitudes than those not having engaged in the process. The research participants for this study consisted of samples of classroom teachers in the public schools of DeKalb, Cumberland, and Putnam counties public school systems of Tennessee and of Brighton and Fowlerville school systems of Michigan. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers concerning their attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career dissatisfaction. The data from the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed to determine comparisons among the school systems and to study data pertaining to the systems combined. Analysis of variance was the statistical technique used to determine the

level of significance of the data. Table 1 shows the percent of responses to each questionnaire item and other information for all five school systems combined. Table 1 shows that about an equal percentage of teachers agree and disagree with the statement that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is. Most teachers seem to agree, sme 69.5 percent, that fellow teachers are supporting their efforts in the classroom. About fifty-five percent of the teachers strongly agree and another 32.8 percent agree that they consider themselves a part of the professional team that includes the principal. It is important to note however, that some 11.9 percent of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Roughly one-third of the teachers agreed and another slightly more than a third disagreed with questionnaire item number 4, "I worry less and have less anxiety about my teaching now than ever before." Some 40.5 percent of the teachers agreed with the statement "I feel more committed to teaching today than ever before." Some 30.3 percent of the teachers strongly agreed with this statement. However, it is important to note that 23.5 percent disagreed with the statement, and 5.7 percent strongly disagreed with the statement. Questionnaire item number 6 states that I would not be happy in any job other than teaching, and some 17.3 percent of the teachers strongly agreed--20.8 percent agreed; however, it is extremely important to note that 45.4 percent disagreed and some 16.5 percent of the teachers strongly disagreed. About 46 percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement "A good teacher doesn't need professional negotiations to reduce the problems of classroom instruction." Another 32.4 percent strongly disagreed on this item. Questionnaire item number 8 states, "Our principal does things which interfere with our regular classroom activities," and 43.1 percent of the teachers disagreed with that statement while

another 37 percent strongly disagreed. On questionnaire item number 9, "I feel I can trust my principal's advice," 30.8 percent strongly agreed and 51.2 percent agreed. The longer a teacher teaches, the more money the teacher should receive, was a statement with which teachers strongly agreed in 42 percent of the cases and agreed in another 40.2 percent of the cases. On questionnaire item number 11, "I consider myself labor and the administration management," 12.9 percent strongly agreed, 24 percent agreed, 39.5 percent disagreed, and 23.6 percent strongly disagreed. If I were beginning college study again I would prepare for teaching was agreed to by 45.5 percent of the teachers. Almost 26 percent of the teachers strongly agreed that if they were beginning college study again they would prepare for teaching. It is noteworthy on this questionnaire item that 17.5 percent of the teachers disagreed that they would prepare for teaching and 11.3 percent strongly disagreed.

On questionnaire item number 13, "I don't like working with parents," 53 percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement, while 40.2 percent strongly disagreed. About 53 percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement "As a teacher, do I feel I must do things that the principal really should do?" Some 47.7 percent of the teachers and another 46.2 percent agreed that they worked actively within their departments or grade levels for problems and concerns. In response to the questionnaire item "I wish I were teaching somewhere else," some 47.9 percent of the teachers disagreed and some 36 percent strongly disagreed. Another 5.4 percent strongly agreed with the item and 10.7 percent agreed.

An analysis of the data shows that most teachers in the study have positive attitudes toward job satisfaction, interpersonal trust, organizational commitment, and career dissatisfaction as these items were measured by the items on the questionnaire. However, it is difficult and subjective

to make general judgments concerning the data. Perhaps the greatest value of this study is in the consideration of the data considered seperately by each questionnaire item.

Table 2 consists of the percentage of agreement or disagreement on questionnaire items that were statistically significant by school systems. Only those items are reported that were statistically significant beyond the .05 level. Question number 3, "I consider myself part of a professional team which includes the principal" had the highest percentage of teachers strongly agreeing in the Putnam County school system and the highest percentage of teachers strongly disagreeing was in the Brighton, Michigan, school system.

On questionnaire item number 8, "My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities," the highest percentage of teachers checking strongly agree was in the Cumberland County school system and the highest percentage checking strongly disagree was in the Fowlerville, Michigan, school system. On questionnaire item number 9, "I feel I can trust my principal's advice," the highest percentage of agreement was in the DeKalb County system and the highest percentage of strongly disagree was in the Brighton school system. On number 11, "I consider myself labor and the administration management," the strongly agree percentage was highest in Brighton and strongly disagree was highest in the Cumberland County schools. On questionnaire item number 13, "I don't like working with parents," strongly agree was highest in Brighton and strongly disagree was highest in DeKalb County. On item number 14, "As a teacher, do I feel I must do things that the principal really should do?" strongly agreed had the highest percentage of teachers in Brighton and strongly disagreed had the highest percentage of teachers in Putnam County.

Questionnaire item number 16, "I wish I were teaching somewhere else," had the highest percentage of teachers that strongly agreed in Brighton and the highest number of teachers strongly disagreeing in Cumberland County.

On the questionnaire items reported in Table 2, it seems that the professional attitudes of teachers are positive. Only one school system on one questionnaire item had a majority of teachers who answered negatively. The Brighton teachers on questionnaire item number 11, "I consider myself labor and the administration management," had some 56.6 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing while some 43.4 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The data reported in Table 2, and other data gathered in the study, indicate somewhat more negative responses, in general, on the questionnaire items by the Michigan school systems than those in Tennessee. This could mean that the process of professional negotiation causes the professional attitudes of teachers to be more negative than those of teachers who have not yet engaged in the process.

TABLE 1

Percent of Responses to each Questionnaire Item and Other Information--All Five School Systems Combined

	SA	A	D	SD	Significance	Remarks
1.	9.2	41.8	37.2	11.9	.24	NS
2.	22.3	65.9	8.3	3.4	.21	NS
3.	55.5	32.8	7.2	4.5	.00	S
4.	17.1	30.8	37.6	14.4	.13	NS
5.	30.3	40.5	23.5	5.7	.09	NS
6.	17.3	20.8	45.4	16.5	.06	NS
7.	5.4	15.8	46.3	32.4	.44	NS
8.	5.3	14.5	43.1	37.0	.00	S
9.	30.8	51.2	12.3	5.8	.00	S
10.	42.0	40.2	14.8	3.0	.53	NS
11.	12.9	24.0	39.5	23.6	.00	S
12.	25.7	45.5	17.5	11.3	.12	NS
13.	.8	6.0	53.0	40.2	.00	S
14.	5.4	20.5	53.1	20.9	.04	S
15.	47.7	46.2	5.0	1.1	.16	NS
16.	5.4	10.7	47.9	36.0	.00	S

SA Strongly Agree
A Agree
D Disagree
SD Strongly Disagree

Brighton, MI, Public School System
Cumberland Co., TN, Public School System
DeKalb Co., TN, Public School System
Fowlerville, MI, Public School System
Putnam Co., TN, Public School System

TABLE 2

Percentage of Agreement or Disagreement on Questionnaire Items that were Statistically Significant by School System

3. I consider myself part of a professional team which inclues the principal.

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	59.4	58.2	19.4	54.3	72.2
A	36.5	35.8	32.3	25.7	25.0
D	0.0	3.0	38.7	11.4	2.8
SD	4.2	3.0	9.7	8.6	0.0

8. My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities.

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	5.3	0.0	6.7	17.1	2.8
A	9.6	14.9	23.3	28.6	5.6
D	40.4	35.8	53.3	42.9	55.6
SD	44.7	49.3	16.7	11.4	36.1

9. I feel I can trust my principal's advice.

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	48.9	12.1	6.9	22.9	44.4
A	35.1	75.8	58.6	48.6	44.4
D	9.6	6.1	27.6	22.9	8.3
SD	6.4	6.1	6.9	5.7	2.8

11. I consider myself "labor" and the administration "management."

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	14.9	9.0	23.3	17.1	2.7
A	24.5	31.3	33.3	14.3	10.8
D	40.4	43.3	26.7	22.9	56.8
SD	20.2	16.4	16.7	45.7	29.7

TABLE 2 (continued)

13. I don't like working with parents.

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	0.0	0.0	6.5	0.0	0.0
A	6.3	4.5	16.1	2.9	2.7
D	46.9	52.2	54.8	57.1	64.9
SD	46.9	43.3	22.6	40.0	32.4

14. As a teacher do I feel I must do things that the principal really should do?

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	5.3	4.5	12.9	6.5	0.0
A	17.9	20.9	29.0	32.3	8.8
D	53.7	59.7	51.6	35.5	55.9
SD	23.2	14.9	6.5	25.8	35.3

16. I wish I were teaching somewhere else.

	DeKalb	Fowlerville	Brighton	Cumberland	Putnam
SA	6.3	6.2	6.7	0.0	5.4
A	4.2	30.8	3.3	8.8	0.0
D	53.7	41.5	53.3	41.2	45.9
SD	35.8	21.5	36.7	50.0	48.6

DeKalb County, Tennessee, Public School System
Fowlerville, Michigan, Public School System
Brighton, Michigan, Public School System
Cumberland County, Tennessee, Public School System
Putnam County, Tennessee, Public School System

SA Strongly Agree
A Agree
D Disagree
SD Strongly Disagree

TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY

Please respond to each of the sixteen statements below by selecting what you feel is your most appropriate response. The choice of responses is: 1 - strongly agree, 2 - agree, 3 - disagree, 4 - strongly disagree. Please indicate your choice of response by placing the appropriate numeral in the space to the left of each statement. The information you provide for this study will be used in such a way that individual responses cannot be identified. We appreicate very much your participation in this study.

_____1. I believe that the longer a teacher has taught, the better the teacher is.

_____2. I feel my fellow teachers are supporting my efforts in the classroom.

_____3. I consider myself part of a professional team which includes the principal.

_____4. I worry less and have less anxiety about my teaching now than ever before.

_____5. I feel more committed to teaching today than ever before.

_____6. I would not be happy in any job other than teaching.

_____7. A good teacher doesn't need professional negotiations to reduce the problems of classroom instruction.

_____8. My principal does things which interfere with my regular classroom activities.

_____9. I feel I can trust my principal's advice.

____10. The longer a teacher teaches the more money the teacher should receive.

____11. I consider myself "labor," and the administration, "management."

____12. If I were beginning college study again, I would prepare for teaching.

____13. I don't like working with parents.

____14. As a teacher I feel I must do things that the principal really should do.

____15. I work actively with my department or grade level for its concerns.

____16. I wish I were teaching somewhere else.